

Apla's claims exaggerated, say police

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■ But movement a threat to negotiations:

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THE Azanian People's Liberation Army (Apla) used disinformation to create an exaggerated picture of its own capabilities, according to the police.

The movement, however, was a real threat to peace and the established negotiations process, says Law and Order Minister Mr Hernus Kriel.

Apla's claims of having killed 500 security force members last year, if one interprets police statistics for 1992, verge on the incredible.

According to official Government statistics, only 226 members of the South African Police had in fact died in 1992 from various causes, including accidents, while on duty.

Lieutenant-General Johan le Roux, of the SAP's Crime Combating and Investigation Division, said at the weekend that in eight instances only had Apla members been connected to the deaths.

"It is thus evident that Apla uses disinformation to create an exaggerated picture of its own capabilities," Le Roux said.

Apla does, however, remain a problem for the SAP, Mr Hernus Kriel, said at the weekend.

Kriel believes that the nuisance factor Apla represents and the misery index which it influences will turn people against the PAC. The movement did very little to speed the flow of negotiations in South Africa, he said.

Opposition to negotiations

Kriel believes that the ANC has left a vacuum on the extreme left where it once sat and that the PAC was, through Apla, trying to secure this position for itself by tapping the support of people who are opposed to negotiations.

According to SAP intelligence, Apla decided early in January that its cadres would lie low while interest in its activities was high and while civilians were busy arming themselves.

But as soon as things were "back to normal", Apla would strike again, Kriel said.

Kriel's intelligence on Apla appears to be thorough and covers funding, training and operations.

The SAP believes, for example, that Apla received R14 million from the Libyan government during 1991 and that the PAC's military wing was operating from at least 10 bases in Transkei and Ciskei.

While the Government knew where these bases were it was difficult to launch pre-emptive strikes against them because they operated intermittently and arbitrarily, Kriel said.

"Our informants are not always at a phone when the bases are up and running," Kriel said.

A base, he said, was not a formal set-up with tents behind barbed wire fences and marching soldiers in uniform on the compound. It was more like a single house where individuals were handled briefly.

Military training

It is estimated that Apla had about 120 cadres in these states. Military training still took place in Tanzania, Uganda, Libya, Egypt, Guinea, Zimbabwe and Iran.

"Although Apla's military operations are mainly planned in Zimbabwe and are to a certain extent coordinated under the control of Sabelo Phama, the territory of the Republic of Transkei is used for the training of Apla recruits and also as a platform for attacks, especially in South Africa," Le Roux said.

Since January 7 this year the SAP had investigated cases against 85 members of either Apla or the PAC for ordinary crimes relating from what Le Roux called "intimidation" to robbery, public violence, possession of unlicensed firearms and assaults.

Hit squads blamed for 45 murders

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■ MONITOR'S SUBMISSION Commission told that residents know the culprits

KWAZULU POLICE AND HIT squads were allegedly responsible for at least 45 deaths in Empangeni's Esikhawini township in the past five months, Ms Mary de Haas said yesterday.

De Haas, anthropologist and Natal unrest monitor, was making submissions to a committee of the Goldstone Commission which was holding a preliminary inquiry in Empangeni on causes of violence — excluding ANC-Inkatha rivalry — in the area.

De Haas alleged no action had been taken to prevent the alleged KZP and hit squad activities, despite repeated calls for a Goldstone inquiry there.

The unrest monitor submitted that killings at Esikhawini were widely perceived to have been carried out by either the KZP or people acting in collusion

with this force. "Residents assure me that every one knows who is responsible for this violence, but they do not trust either the South African Police or the KZP sufficiently to make statements or to pass evidence."

Witnesses were only prepared to give evidence before the Goldstone Commission in camera.

She said there had been incidents of political violence in the area over the past two years. The situation deteriorated in August when at least 31 people were killed. Since then another 14 died.

These attacks had taken place despite warnings to senior members of the security forces by herself and Democratic Party unrest monitor Mr Roy Ainslie.

She provided dates and document back up her claims. - Sapa

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